

Who do you say I am - Matthias

More questions to ponder:

- Why is an alarm clock going off when it actually turns on?
- How do keep off the grass signs get there?
- Why are they called apartments when they are all stuck together?
- Why is the man who invests all your money called a broker?
- What do people in China call their good plates?
- Do the Alphabet song and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star have the same tune?

Now that you have sung both songs to see if they are the same tune, let's look at today's message.

How many enjoy giving gifts? How many love receiving gifts? Christmas, birthday, anniversary, Presidents' Day, just another day. I don't care I love receiving gifts.

The problem is some of the gifts we receive aren't like super fun and least not right away, they come with. . .how can I say this without losing it? They say right on the box, "some assembly required." Ugh. Some assembly for me results in days. There are times when I look at the instructions and say what? It can just suck life right out of you.

Now on the other hand I like things to work. I love reading, comes assembled, just add water, remove from box and play. That is my kind of gift.

Have you ever received a gift and you look at it and just stare at it and then ask yourself, "now what do we do?"

I think the disciples and some of the followers of Jesus had that kind of experience. They had a "now what do we do" moment. We find it in the book of Acts chapter 1. In this portion of Scripture, the followers of Jesus just finished seeing the Lord ascend into heaven after He told them to be His witnesses wherever they are, and wherever they went. He told them to wait in Jerusalem until they receive

power from on high, power from the Holy Spirit.

Here they are in Jerusalem waiting as they were told, waiting for this power from the Holy Spirit. And just maybe in their waiting they feel like we do when we get that gift that tells us, "some assembly required." They ask this question, "now what do we do?"

Think about it for a moment. They just witnessed Jesus ascend into heaven, a couple angels stick around and tell them stop looking into the sky He's coming back the same way He left. And now they have this mission to accomplish. They are to be His witnesses.

When they received that commission they was no doubt after seeing Jesus, having Him talk with them, there must have been some excitement in their hearts. Some that as Larry the Cable guy would say, Get er done. We need to go tell people and like now. But then they started thinking about what that means. What if we start telling people and word gets back to those religious leaders who had Jesus killed? They just might come after us. And

besides Jesus said go wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes with power.

I can imagine quite the mix of emotions. One part joy. . .one part fear. . .one part uncertainty. . .and one part betrayal and sadness with the death of Judas. I mean after all he was part of the twelve now they are down to eleven, and the question looms, "now what do we do?"

Let's pick up the story in Acts chapter 1 beginning at verse 15.

Acts 1:15 - In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty).

This really is a powerful Scripture. Really pastor why's that. I'm glad you asked. Think about this, we were just told in our text that they numbered how many? 120. Think about that. There were 120 that pledged to follow Jesus at this time. Some scholars believe it is very unlikely that any of them had ever been outside the

confines of Palestine.

What difference does that make? Thanks for asking that question as well. These were 120 ordinary men and woman who were told to go out and evangelize the world with the Gospel. This thing we call the Body of Christ, the church, had a small beginning.

Peter the same one that found himself denying the Lord not to many days prior stands up among these 120 followers of Jesus and begins to address them. Look at verse 16.

Acts 1:16 - and said, "Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus.

Judas sold Jesus to the religious leaders for 30 pieces of silver. Judas guided these religious leaders in the Garden of Gethsemane after the Last Supper to arrest Jesus. Peter was sharing with these 120 followers that everything

Judas did was foretold in the Scriptures. The Psalms as David being inspired by the Holy Spirit wrote about his happening years before it would ever come to pass.

Psalm 41:9 - Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me.

Or Psalm 55:12-15 tells us, If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising against me, I could hide.
13 But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, 14 with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God, as we walked about among the worshipers. 15 Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the realm of the dead, for evil finds lodging among them.

Many scholars believe that Psalms like these written by David as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit were indeed a prediction, a foretelling of this even in which Judas betrays the Lord. So what Peter is doing in moments like these where the 120 have been praying and searching the Scriptures together is helping these followers make some

sense of why these things happened the way that they did through the lens of Scripture and prayer while being in community with one another.

Part of what it means to be in community is to do life together by gathering to pray and study Scriptures together. See I believe by doing these spiritual disciplines together it helps us make some sense of what to do next when posed with the question, "now what do we do?"

Like the earlier disciples and followers of Jesus we all need people in our life to help us make sense out of what just happened.

I might just add here this is one reason why we need to come in unity with one another and gather together as a community in worship. When someone among is is struggling we can gather around and pray and help answer the question, "what do we do now."

Give more examples.

So here we have Peter helping these 120 followers make sense out of what just happened through the lens of prayer and the Scriptures. He tells them about even Judas' betrayal and wicked deeds were used by God to advance God's purposes.

Scripture doesn't say this but I could almost see Peter going back to when Joseph was sold into slavery and opens up to Genesis 50 verse 20 and reads out it to them. Look at it.

Genesis 50:20 - You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

It goes on in verse 17 and reading on through to verse 20 of Acts chapter 1.

Acts 1:17-20 - He was one of our number and shared in our ministry.” 18 (With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out.

19 Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20 “For,” said Peter, “it is written in the Book of Psalms: “ ‘May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,’ and, “ ‘May another take his place of leadership.

That by the way is actually a quote from Psalm 69:25.

Judas ended his life after betraying Jesus. He even tried to give the 30 pieces of silver back to the religious leaders that he sold Jesus out to, but the religious leaders would not take the money back because to them it was considered "blood money." So Judas ends his life, it is described as a gruesome scene both here and in chapter 27 of Matthew's Gospel. Then the religious leaders took this "blood money" and purchased the field where Judas ended his life. It became a cemetery amount the people of that day.

Peter helps the rest of the 120 followers of Jesus to see that God's plans are not going to be thwarted no matter

what happens that may seem confusing to them. Maybe Peter learned that lesson with all that he had been through and done.

There may be things happening in your life right now that seem confusing to you. Maybe you just cannot see how the circumstances of your life could fit into the bigger picture of God's unfolding plans for your life.

- Maybe it is something confusing going on at work
- Maybe it is something confusing going on at home
- Maybe it is something confusing going on with the kids. . .or with your parents. . .or with a friend or a close relationship
- Maybe you are sitting there with a lot of confusion going on inside of you wondering; Now what do I do?

When Judas betrayed Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, that had to have been confusing to the rest of the disciples. It was especially confusing when you think about the fact that it was right after Judas through Jesus under the bus that the guards came and arrested Him.

Acts 1:16 again tells us, ". . .Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus."

John MacArthur said, "Judas represents the greatest example of wasted opportunity in all of history."

Think about that, Judas was given a rare privilege, given to only twelve men, of living and ministering with Jesus Christ, God incarnate, for more than three years.

Judas had the same opportunity to come to faith in Jesus as the other eleven did. And when you think of those that he choose there were fishermen, a tax collector, a thief (and Jesus made him the treasurer), a couple were probably tradesmen of some sort. Ordinary folk.

That is why Paul could later write in 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians. 1:26 - Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many

were of noble birth.

He goes on to write, verse 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,

Why? Verse 29 so that no one may boast before him.

Back to Judas even though he was given the same opportunity as the eleven, his motives for following Jesus never were anything but selfish. Judas no doubt shared the common Jewish hope that the Messiah would deliver the nation from those hated Romans. When it became obvious to him that it was not the plan of Jesus to do that, at least not in the way they expected. Judas realized that he would not get the wealth and power that he wanted, Judas decided it was time to cut his losses and get out whatever he could salvage. So he figured giving Jesus up to the religious leaders seemed a way to gain some kind of compensation.

After Judas saw how things were unfolding with Jesus he had some huge regrets. He knew he had made a horrible and even wicked choice. He tried to go back and get a do-over, but it was too late as least that is what the religious leaders made him to believe. The Bible says that Judas ended up taking his own life. Perhaps the disciples were wondering: Now what do we do?

Whatever you've done or whatever regrets you have just come up for air, breath, ask for forgiveness and He is faithful and just and will forgive us. Pick yourself up by the bootstraps and keep going.

What might have happened if Judas, in the midst of a bad decision to betray Jesus, then trusted him.

I am convinced that if he had done what Peter had done, the Lord would have looked at him and called him by name and given him the second change that he was looking for. The religious leaders looked at Judas and said sorry what is done, is done.

Think about it this way. Judas even though he did this terrible thing he was one of the original twelve.

So what pastor what does that have to do with anything?

Glad you asked.

There was significance and symbolism with the twelve disciples and how that related to the twelve tribes of Israel and what they heard Jesus talking about concerning restoring the Kingdom. Surely some of the disciples were wondering how not having Judas around fit into God's plan. Maybe they thought about something Jesus had said earlier in Matthew and how was this now going to be fulfilled with Judas no longer among them. Matthew 19:28 tells us,

Matthew 19:28 - Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

How can that be, we lost one in the battle, we are down to eleven.

How is this going to happen since Judas is gone? Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Peter has the answer to the question: Now what do we do? What Jesus had in mind was for the vacated spot among the twelve to be filled as the church in its infancy would begin to move forward in the coming days and years ahead.

Look at what Peter says they needed to do as God's Spirit led those crucial moments in verses 21 and 22.

Acts 1:21-22 - Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, 22 beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

The answer to the question: "Now what do we do?" We replace the leadership void that was vacated by one of the

twelve.

Oh and by the way we don't just replace this disciple with just anybody. Peter gives the qualifications right here in these verses. He said the qualifications for this disciple, this apostle, must be one who has been with us and with Jesus all the time during those three years that Jesus was around us. He must be one that has been there since Jesus was baptized by John all the way until Jesus died, resurrected and ascended to heaven. One that has never left our side.

In other words, we want an eye-witness who has been with us and been with Jesus and has seen Jesus do and teach the things we have all seen Him do and teach. We need another eye-witness who walked the whole walk with him from the time Jesus was baptized in the Jordan until Jesus ascended to Heaven from the Mount of Olives.

So maybe the disciples start thinking, now who do we know that has that kind of resume? Who has been around that fits that description?

So here they are wondering who might fit the bill. And we see how God leads the followers to take those next steps in replacing this empty seat of leadership amount the 12. Now what do we do? Look how God leads them in verses 23-26.

Acts 1:23-26 - So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen 25 to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." 26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

Two men were selected to fill the spot. Joseph called Barsabbas, and Matthias. Both must have had the qualifications. Both had been with Jesus from the time of His baptism by John and all the way through His ascension. Both were probably ready to fulfill the role and function of an apostle and to be the witness of the resurrection.

The Scripture says that they cast lots to see who would be chosen.

Sounds like an odd way to fulfill a major role doesn't it? Think about it. Up to this point in the Bible, the casting of lots was a way that the people of God trusted that God would make His will known to determine an outcome.

What they would do is put a mark or a name on a stone or piece of parchment. Then they would swirl rocks around the container until one fell out or they would draw out a piece of parchment. The one with the name on it would be deemed to be God's will for that situation.

What is interesting to notice here is that this is the last time we read in the Scriptures where followers of God cast lots to understand or receive God's will for any given situation. There is a good reason for that. The Holy Spirit fell upon them and empowered them in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost. From that point on lots were never used again to determine the will of God.

Show video

Today we can determine the will of God as we pray, search the Scriptures, allow God to lead us by the Holy Spirit, use the five fold ministry to equip the saints. However, on this particular day here in Acts 1, it says that Matthias was chosen by God to fill the role of the twelve apostle.

Why him? Why did God not choose Joseph?

I don't really know why. N.T. Wright says, they would have trusted Joseph. We have no idea what happened to him after this, just as we have limited understanding, for that matter, what happened to Matthias. Some say that Matthias was a missionary to Ethiopia.

What does this have to do with answering the question: Now what do we do? What does this whole part of Scripture have to do with me anyway? What does Jesus have in mind for my life based on what we have been looking at today from Acts 1?

Let me try to address those concerns. First off you need to realize that the power they received in Acts 2 is for us today as well. It started on Pentecost, it didn't end there.

What we need to understand is obedience, from the very beginning when called you, He desired obedience. Scripture puts it this way.

1 Samuel 15:22 - But Samuel replied: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

Now listen I do realize that this was about Saul and some of the things that he did and didn't do. But God still desires obedience.

Here is another. . .

Job 36:11 - If they obey and serve him, they will spend the rest of their days in prosperity and their years in contentment.

I know you all are thinking great, but what did Jesus say about the matter.

Ok let me tell you what Jesus said about the matter.

John 14:15 - "If you love me keep my commandments."

Oh how about this one.

John 15:14 - You are my friends if you do what I command.

Luke 11:28 - ". . Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

Others wrote about also:

2 John 1:6 - And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

James 1:22 - 25 - Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

Let me try and bring this home part of Christian obedience, right from the beginning, was a call to play great parts without pride and seemingly small parts without shame. There are no spectators in the Kingdom of God. There are no great and small parts either. Each of us holds value. And God is no respect of persons.

The boy with just a sack lunch in John 6 wasn't ashamed at what he had, embarrassed that he didn't have more, but rather obedient with what he had and God multiplied it to feed a multitude.

God can use what you will give Him. Moses had a rod. Samson had a jaw bone of a donkey. Gideon was hiding and God called him a mighty warrior.

Your assignment is not my assignment, and my assignment is not your assignment. Each of us has a role to play and God is the one that calls us to it. Our job is to be obedient to what He has called us to and be a faithful witness wherever God may lead us.

Maybe your thinking God doesn't have an assignment for me. He doesn't even know I exist. Well you would be wrong on both accounts.

Psalm 139:15-18 - My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! 18 Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you.

Whether your role in the Kingdom of God is recognized like Matthias or is not recognized like Joseph, we all have a role to play in helping make God's Kingdom come and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

As a matter of fact it is the responsible of ever believer to bring some heaven here to earth. And proclaim the good news of the Gospel.

I know that you were not at the baptism of Jesus at the Jordon, nor did you see Jesus ascend into heaven at the Mount of Olives, however, as a follower of Jesus you are called to be a witness to the resurrection. That is the answer to the question: Now what do we do?

Look how Paul stated this commission it's found in 1 Corinthians 15

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 - Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By

this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. 9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

11 Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

Listen to this from Paul

2 Corinthians 5:20 - We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Let me close with this. We have been looking at Acts 1 look what verse 8 tells us,

Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”